

## Missile Defense and Europe

### Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry A. Obering, Director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency; Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs

Foreign Press Center Briefing  
Washington, DC  
March 28, 2007

11:15 A.M. EST

[View Video](#) | [Real Audio of Briefing](#)

**MODERATOR:** Good morning, and welcome to the Foreign Press Center for another briefing on the U.S. missile defense plans in Europe with our European allies. Again, we're happy to welcome back Ambassador Dan Fried and Lieutenant General Obering, who have both been on -- had extensive consultations in Europe. So they will open with some remarks and then be happy to take your questions.

Ambassador Fried.

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** Hello, everyone. Good to be back here in what I don't doubt will be a continuing series of discussions about missile defense and the politics and debate surrounding missile defense. I've been -- I was in Europe last week in Warsaw, Copenhagen and The Hague. Missile defense was a common theme in all three stops and I wanted to mention this and discuss my views and answer your questions about the way the debate is shaping up.



And I want to start out by saying that there needs to be a discussion of missile defense and the strategic problem and challenge that missile defense in its current iteration is designed to address. But I want to stress from the start that this debate needs to be grounded in the reality of the threat, the potential threat, and the reality of the strategic context that we all face, the "we" in this case being the transatlantic community and the "we" in this case also being Russia because it faces the same threats that we do or similar threats.

The debate should not be, in my view, about issues of 20 years ago and issues of a so-called arms race, and in this context I was struck that today, today in Berlin as a matter of fact, the Americans and Russians are sitting down to discuss post-START issues and transparency issues for the post-START regime after the START Treaty expires. I mention this because the transparency and confidence-building measures which we're going to be discussing are a part and an illustrative part of the developing good strategic relationship between the United States and Russia as we address the new world that we face together.

It is also true that the Treaty of Moscow, which reduced arms, reduced warheads on both sides, is being implemented. To remind you, it calls for massive reductions in warheads on both sides, down to between 1,700 and 2,200 by the end of 2012. The United States is on target to meet reductions. Russia is well on target to meet reductions.

So the notion that somehow missile defense has to be seen as part of an emerging arms race between the United States and Russia, which is some of the odd commentary I hear from some Europeans, has no relationship to reality and the debate about missile defense ought to be conducted in a way, it seems to me, that reflects reality.

Second point is that NATO has, in fact, addressed missile defense issues, and read paragraph 25 of the Riga summit declaration, which refers to a threat, a threat to which missile defenses can provide an answer. The NATO study that the summit declaration refers to was a study of short- and mid-range missile defense systems. In theory, it's determined that the systems have the theoretical possibility of being effective. NATO has called for more work on this.

In our view, the more NATO is involved in this, the better. And the bilateral systems which the United States is preparing to discuss with the Poles and the Czechs could be -- and in fact we would all benefit if they were -- integrated with national systems and linked up with some sort of NATO-integrated system. It's early to discuss specifics. I'm not announcing anything. But in terms of our -- the general American view of the way ahead, it certainly includes a role for NATO.

I would also add that we look forward, we look forward to discussions with our Russian friends about missile defense issues, both to ease their concerns -- of course, we've had multiple high-level discussions with the Russians before, but if we have to keep explaining this, we are happy to do so; and to the degree to which the Russians are ready, I certainly think that cooperation with Russia is something we would be interested in.

So I found the European debate to be a mixture of genuine interest in this new strategic challenge that Iran poses, genuine interest in discussing how missile defenses can play a stabilizing role, how missile defense will avoid a situation in which Europe and the United States enjoy different levels of security. In fact, the NATO area should have the same level of security, in the American view.

But laced in with this were some concerns which I felt unfounded, so I've tried to address these here today.

It is also true that politics may play a part in this, which is always -- which is both inevitable dealing with democracies, but it's the job of officials such as myself to try to bring the discussion back to the actual issues, not to the politics and meta-issues which can cloud more than they obscure.

I found specifically that the Poles, Danes, Dutch had different kinds of questions. The Poles were obviously interested in the bilateral relationship with the United States. They expressed concerns about any additional insecurities or pressures from the Russians. They want to deepen their cooperation with the United States, but they want to -- the Polish Government is quite clearly going to negotiate based on its own national interests, and I expect they will negotiate strongly, as is the Polish habit.

The Danes and the Dutch were interested in the larger strategic issues and I found my conversations there to be actually quite hopeful because we were getting into the issues of reality, not the issues of the meta-reality that so often characterized the European -- some of the European debate.

I will be happy to answer any questions about this. I gather that running on the wires now is a reference to a phone call between Presidents Putin and Bush in which missile defense came up. I heard that from Reuters, and as far as I know, that is an accurate account. But I think the way forward lies through continued consultations with the Russians. We've had a long track record of consultations with them on this issue. We intend to continue those. And I look forward both to answering your questions and to working with European governments.

Now my colleague and collaborator, General Obering, is welcome to say a few things, and then we'll both happily take your questions.

**LTG OBERING:** Thank you very much, Ambassador Fried. Well, good morning. I want to also provide a little context for some questions that may be generated as a result of our meeting this morning, also bring you up to speed a little bit on my activities since I last addressed you in February.

First of all, a little bit of the context. Again, for the last two and a half years, the United States has been fielding a system that has been aimed toward defending the United States, our deployed forces, our allies and friends, against what we see to be threats that are emerging from North Korea as well as Iran. We initially turned our attention to North Korea because we felt that that had the highest sense of urgency and we believe that that was somewhat justified by the activities last summer.

We have since begun to turn our attention to Iran as well. Modifying radar in United Kingdom is one of the first steps of that and then being able to provide and extend this coverage to our allies and our deployed forces in the European theater against an emerging Iranian threat is clearly what we are geared toward.

We have had very good success in the past two and a half years with respect to testing of this system. We have come a long, long way from the failure-ridden program back in the '90s and we've built a lot on the investments in the technologies since then. In fact, we have now had 24 successful hit-to-kill intercepts in about 32 attempts since 2001, and that includes though that we've had successes in the last 14 to 15 flight tests over the past two, two and a half years. So this program works. It is a capability that does work and that we will rely on as we move into this 21st century.

Just a couple of quick points on the elements that we're talking about, of course, are being able to provide up to ten interceptors in a site in Poland, to provide a midcourse radar in the Czech Republic and a transportable radar that we would locate later on because it's very -- it's highly transportable and easily fielded.

I want to remind everybody that these are defensive assets. These are not offensive missiles. They do not even carry warheads. There are no explosives on these missiles. We operate on, as I said, a hit-to-kill technology, which is we actually drive a very small kill vehicle into an enemy warhead to destroy it. And the reason it is so effective is because the speeds that we do this at are so great it basically destroys the warhead from a kinetic energy perspective. In fact, the kill vehicles that we're talking about that would be placed on the interceptors in Poland are no more than about 70 to 75 kilograms. They're very small and they operate, as I said, on the hit-to-kill technology.

I have personally traveled to brief the NATO-Russia Council since I last met with you. I also traveled to Berlin, met with the Germans; to Paris, met with the French; and to Kiev with the Ukrainians. We've also had discussions with delegations from the Czechs and the Poles here and we have folks that are there this week that are going through discussions with those countries as well.

We have plans to visit, in the coming weeks, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Hungary, and then going back to the NATO-Russia Council for further discussions at a more technical expert level. Now, in those discussions there's a theme that I picked up that I just want to emphasize and I think it's very, very important. In fact, I think it's one of the most important themes that we can concentrate on. And I get asked -- well, first of all, doesn't this upset the balance that we've achieved in the past between deterrence and what about arms control? Doesn't this contradict arms control measures?

And what I want to put this in the context of is that is -- missile defense is part of a spectrum. It's part of an entire toolbox that we try to use to address the ballistic missile threat. At one end of that spectrum, of course, you have deterrence and we believe that that is still a very viable concept and we've relied on that from the United States' perspective for many years. And we believe we will continue to rely on that deterrent factor for those nations and those organizations that can be deterred.

There are other nations and organizations in which arms control measures are very effective, both positive and negative aspects of that and we believe very strongly in that. And we also believe, though, that we may come into contact with nation states or non-state actors that are deterrable, that are not affected by arms control measures. And when you have warheads flying in the air, it is a moral obligation to do something about that for the population, not just turning around and just saying, sorry, we can't do anything about that.

So we believe missile defense fits into a spectrum that includes deterrence and arms control measures. And the other reason why we believe it's so important, and this is what I think it's fundamental, the reason that we've had a proliferation of ballistic missiles around the world for these past many years is because they are highly valued. Why are they highly valued? Well, historically, because there has been no deployed defense capability against these weapons. Well, if you begin to deploy defensive capabilities to where you can negate these missiles, it begins to devalue them. And so we believe that it will begin to have a tremendous effect on the proliferation of these missiles because they will lose their value to the nation or to the organizations because we believe we can render them ineffective.

And so that puts hopefully some of the -- some of what we're doing in context and I'll be happy to answer any questions that you may have along with the Ambassador.

**MODERATOR:** If you would state your name and organization, please wait for the mike when you have a question.

Yes, sir. Just wait for the mike.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Jędrzej Bielecki from Rzeczpospolita Polish daily. First of all, if you could elaborate about the discussion today between President Bush and President Putin, what was the message of the American leader?

And secondly, on Monday Congress adopted a resolution concerning the invitation of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO. Don't you think that this could be -- could make you more difficult to convince Russians about the good intentions of the United States? And what is the position of the Administration on this? I mean, do you want really to -- did you take -- took any decision on the Georgian issue -- inviting Georgia to NATO?

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** Well, I have nothing further about the discussion between the two presidents. You can check with the White House about that, but I really don't have anything more.

With respect to NATO membership, I'm curious to take a question from a Polish newspaper about the allegedly destabilizing effects of NATO expansion on Russia. I thought we were pretty much past that particular debate. I've always thought that NATO enlargement was immensely stabilizing. Can you imagine a Europe today with 100 million Europeans between Germany and Russia that were kept out of Europe's chief security and integrative institutions? That would indeed be destabilizing. We believe that NATO enlargement is a good thing because it extends security and stability to countries which could use it. It doesn't threaten anyone. The notion that NATO poses a threat to Russia is simply wrong.

But with respect to Georgia and Ukraine, no, our country has not made a decision about whether they should be offered NATO membership. In the case of Ukraine, Ukraine itself has not decided whether it seeks NATO membership. As declaratory government policy that's one thing, and the Ukrainian Government is itself divided, but

the Ukrainian public is very much divided. So the first thing we look for is for a Ukrainian national consensus.

In Georgia there is a consensus. They do want NATO membership. We welcome the progress in their reforms -- their peaceful deepening of their democratic institutions, of constructive resolution of some of their regional conflicts. And let's take this a step at a time. Too early to make that decision, but we welcome Georgia's forward progress.

Again, NATO is -- no matter how many times the charge is made otherwise, it remains a false charge that NATO is an aggressive or anti-Russian organization. It is an organization that extends security and stability, and an organization which is working to help the Afghan people, which is working to promote stability in Kosovo. This is an organization that Russia -- that we hope Russia will learn to work with even more in the future.

**QUESTION:** Mario Bardazzi, ANSA Italian News Agency ANSA. A question for General Obering. Yesterday in a hearing in Congress, you said that you already have some NATO countries that are sharing technologies with you and you mentioned an agreement with Italy on technology sharing. Could you elaborate on this? And can you tell us if Italy and other southern European countries will be full covered by the system?

**LTG OBERING:** Sure. We have recently signed a -- what we call a framework agreement with the Italian Government that basically outlines some of the mechanisms and processes by which we will collaborate on missile defense. So we're at just at the beginning of that. This framework agreement basically outlines the general way that we will approach the agreements and the projects, and then we list projects underneath that agreement that we decide to pursue. And I won't be any more specific on the projects because that's just beginning in that process, but it was a major milestone that we were able to sign that agreement with Italy.

They joined, by the way, other nations like United Kingdom, Denmark, Australia, Japan and others that have signed an agreement with us. We also have, by the way, relations and ongoing discussions with a whole variety of countries around the world with respect to missile defense. It is becoming more and more of a concern.

With respect to coverage, the nation of Italy is covered. In fact, all of the nations that would be threatened by a long-range missile or what we call a higher-end intermediate-range missile, the system covers those countries. The countries that are very close in to an Iranian threat, such as Turkey, for example, portions of Greece, they would not be threatened by the long-range missiles. They would be threatened by the shorter-range missiles and you have other defenses that can be brought into play to address that.

In fact, that's one of the areas that we believe is very much within a NATO context because NATO has stood up a active layered (ph) theater missile defense program office that is managed by a French -- has a French program manager and an American deputy program manager. That office is concentrating on the shorter-range missile defense capabilities that could be brought to bear within NATO. We believe that that would fit a -- that'd be a nice dovetail, so to speak, to the longer-range umbrella that could be provided between the United States, Poland and the Czech Republic. So we believe that this fits very nicely into that NATO type of context.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, right here.

**QUESTION:** I'm Katja Gloger, Stern Magazine from Germany. Ambassador Fried, good morning. You just said that missile defense could play a stabilizing role in the relations also to Europe. At least for Germany and at least for the time being, the opposite is true. Our magazine will publish a poll tomorrow where Germans have been asked about the threat for world peace. 48 percent of Germans believe that the United States is a bigger threat to world security than Iran and 72 percent are against missile defense. So how will you convince Europeans and especially Germans that your position is the right one?

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED:** Well, I'm aware of the polls. I wonder how comfortable Germany would be in a bilateral security relationship with Iran, okay? So I don't entirely take -- I don't even think that many people who say that really mean it. They're saying something else, but this is not for me to say what they think. The -- I understand the politics in Germany about this issue are -- is, to my mind, somewhat exotic. It reminds me of the debate in the 1980s about the Pershings. At a time when the Soviet Union was run by Leonid Brezhnev, Germany was divided, Berlin was divided, this was a nasty period in the Cold War and yet, hundreds of thousands of Germans regularly demonstrated against the American military presence.

The way the Cold War ended, I thought, was pretty good. It ended peacefully, it ended with your country united. I don't think, therefore, we need to look back with great anxiety over how we worked together in those years, nor do I think that the debates and the political slogans of that period need to be readapted currently.

When I said missile defense could be stabilizing, I meant in a strategic context and I think General Obering explained it. I think it would be profoundly destabilizing, for example, if we were to find in 15 years that Iran had a handful, a dozen or so ballistic missiles capable of striking Europe and nuclear warheads to put on top of them. Imagine that kind of a situation where Europe was completely vulnerable to these weapons, put yourselves in the position of Germany if there were a crisis in the Middle East. Threats to Israel; is that really the position that would serve Germany security or European security if there were a well-developed, limited, and very modest missile defense system in Germany? It would be profoundly stabilizing because there would no longer be the sense of imminent and massive vulnerability. That's what I meant.

**LTG OBERING:** Could I add something to that, please? Polls are important to understand public attitudes, but they're not everything and they change very rapidly. In fact, I think if you went back and took a look in this country before September 11th, you wouldn't find a large percentage of the population that would even recognize a threat from a terrorist group like al-Qaida. Of course, that changed overnight. You can also see what happened here last summer when we were inundated in the Missile Defense Agency with dozens and dozens and dozens of phone calls from the media, both broadcast and press, about what can you do about these North Korean missiles.

And in a case of missiles, you can't affect the defense overnight. It's not something you can turn the way public opinion can turn overnight. You can't do that overnight. It takes time to build these defenses. So what may be true today with respect to popular opinion or support can change very dramatically and rapidly tomorrow as world scenes unfold. So what is responsible for -- or responsible leaders is to try to understand that direction and try to do something about it before you try to connect the dots after the fact.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, we have a question from New York. If you would go ahead, please, and ask the question.

**QUESTION:** Hi. I'm Adrian Novac from Antena T.V. Channel One. And my question is a follow-up. Lately there were a lot of reports in Romania media that shields (ph) will not cover Romania. And my question is: How do you respond to these concerns? And also are you afraid that there will be a division among NATO members because of this problem?

Thank you so much.

**LTG OBERING:** Well, as I stated, for those countries that would be threatened from a long range weapon they are covered. So countries that are inside of what we would consider to be the range for the longer range weapons, they would be covered against the shorter range threats with protection that could be generated from NATO. We have capabilities today within the U.S. military with our Patriot system, with our sea-based interceptors that could provide that coverage. And we have a capability that will be coming out in the next two years or so, which is our Terminal High Altitude Area Defense weapon which is a very highly mobile land-based system as well. So there are systems to be able to cover that.

I think what's important is for NATO to decide how they're going to approach that. Like I said, they've stood up a program to do that. They need to come to grips with that and then we need to make sure we can marry that together with the long range capabilities.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED:** Let me add something there. The question also addressed a principle that General Obering and I have been talking about, which is

that there should not be two levels or multiple levels of security within the transatlantic community and the NATO alliance. There should be one level of security and it is not right that some countries be vulnerable while other countries are covered. So what General Obering was saying is that we -- there are multiple ways to cover countries, but there is a single principle that we need to respect which is that there should not be in the end multiple levels of security. There should not be class A and class B allies. And it does the United States, frankly, little good if we are secured from ballistic missile attack but our European allies are completely vulnerable. That also is a strategic problem for us.

**MODERATOR:** Yes, in the back.

**QUESTION:** Alexander Panov, Russian Television International. And my question is a very (sic) question. Why not invite Russia to participate in this program? You said you are ready for cooperation. For example, if Poland and Czech Republic have something against Russian militaries participate in this program on their territory, why not to find some common base in Azerbaijan, for example, or -- well, why not to make invitation and the problem with Russia will be solved? Or this propaganda war will be -- on your side you will win in this case? Very naïve question, sorry for this.

**LTG OBERING:** No, it's a very straightforward question and it's one that we are very interested in answering, which is yes. We are very open to Russian participation and invitation into collaboration on missile defense in the broader sense and on any level, all the way down to specifics in terms of potentially sharing data and radar data information. We will be collecting data from the radars that I talked about. The Russians have radars as well that could be very useful to the defense of Russia, obviously, and the European theater. We would love to share that data and collaborate in that. And hopefully what this will do is it will spark those discussions that have stalled in the past with respect to Russian collaboration so that we can actually welcome them as a full partner in this collaboration as we go forward.

**MODERATOR:** Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Marcin Gadzinski, Gazeta Poland. A question for Secretary Fried, a NATO question, you said more NATO involvement the better, so what is the difference of opinion? Could you specify what you want to do and Germans and other NATO members don't want to do and what they want to do and you don't want? Could you specify more on that? What is the difference of opinion?

Also if I may, a question for General Obering, do you have a specific location in Poland that you have selected and could you name it? Thank you.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED:** We all agree that NATO should discuss matters of common NATO security. We all agree that missile defense is an area that ought to be discussed. There is agreement at NATO that short and mid-range theater systems should be discussed and there is, as General Obering said, a NATO program office helping develop these systems. Where there needs to be more discussion is how the programs that may come into existence between the United States, Czech Republic and Poland can be fit into an all NATO system, what kind of integration and, of course, how possible collaboration with Russia would work. So these things could be -- need to be fit together and there needs to be a discussion.

But at the official level there is far more understanding, far more commonality of views than you would ever dream from reading some of the European press.

**LTG OBERING:** If I could -- feedback on that and then I'll answer your other question. We believe that there is a growing recognition within NATO of the threat as Ambassador Fried stated. That came out of recent communiqués. But even in our ongoing discussions with our NATO partners, both in the NATO context as well as bilaterally, we see a growing alarm over what is happening in Iran and that is being shared by the NATO partners.

To your specific question about location, we actually looked at three different locations in Poland that were nominated by the government. We have visited those sites. We will continue that evaluation. But no, we haven't specified a site. There's a preferred site but that would be up to the government of Poland to be able to announce that.

**MODERATOR:** Yeah, right here, the mike's coming.

**QUESTION:** Thanks. Tomas Zalewski Polish Press Agency. Sorry to be so repetitive, because we keep asking these questions again and again. But shouldn't the United States deploy these Patriot missiles in Poland and possibly Terminal High Altitude Defense system, as some people say, to better convince Poland that it's really in the interest in Poland and that we have some security -- additional security guarantees?

And secondly, has the chief negotiator been actually nominated after all? And when do negotiations start with Poland? Two questions, actually, or three.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED:** Well, you've asked a couple of different questions buried in that. One of them is we have -- we should have with Poland a serious discussion of the additional threats, if any, that would have to be addressed if this facility were actually established. The Poles will want to have that discussion. That was clear from my talks in Warsaw. And we look forward to having it.

So we need to have a serious discussion of the threat and then the measures taken to counter that threat. There's also another question, which is what my friend and colleague Eric Edelman referred to today as ancillary benefits to Poland. Those were his words. He did some press earlier today in Berlin and I think he used that phrase. I don't know what they would be, but obviously, as our bilateral defense relationship with Poland deepens, we will be discussing a lot of these issues.

The question though is how this benefits Polish national security. Poland will make a national decision. We will have some intensive discussions over quite a period of time to resolve these issues and share ideas, listen to Polish concerns. I look forward to those.

**MODERATOR:** We'll go to George (Geddes AP).

**QUESTION:** Also about these negotiations --

**MODERATOR:** One second.

**QUESTION:** Who the (inaudible) negotiations (inaudible) American (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** The American side?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** I don't know. I don't know precisely when the negotiations will begin. We're waiting -- we're going to be talking with the Polish Government about that, and there will be -- you know, doubtless there will be a team of folks from the uniformed military, Defense Department policy side, State Department, but I don't have a name for you yet.

**QUESTION:** George Gedda, AP. Dan, you've mentioned two or three times the possible threat that the Poles could face, presumably from Russia. Won't the Czechs face the same threat level as the Poles? Isn't there a bit of parallelism here?

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** Yes, and what I said with respect to Poland applies equally to the Czech Republic. I mentioned Poland because I was recently in Warsaw, had that much on my mind. And yes, of course the remarks of a Russian general a few weeks ago about attacking these countries if they dared develop these systems was, let us say, unfortunate, of course.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.) This is question for General Obering. What difference does it make for you now that the Czech Government just today agreed to start a negotiation? Does that mean you can start some other screening of the sides, some measurement, or does it make any difference on a technical level?

**LTG OBERING:** First of all, it represents good progress in the discussions with the Czech Republic. It also means that we can expand some of the survey work that we're doing and make sure that we fully understand the environment and do more of what we call the technical site survey work that you just described. So that is a very good sign, a very positive sign. In fact, overall, I think we're getting positive signs from both Poland and the Czech Republic with respect to collaboration and moving ahead.

**MODERATOR:** One right here.

**QUESTION:** Jim Wolf, Reuters. I wondered if I could draw you out on how possible collaboration with Russia might work. Is there any prospect for extending missile defense against long-range threats to Russian territory?

**LTG OBERING:** There certainly is the ability, the technical ability, to do that and we would welcome those types of discussions with the Russians. There's also capabilities that the Russians themselves have that could be incorporated, I think, into a larger system, a larger capability. Those are the types of discussions that we would like to re-engage our Russian partners on and to determine how we could move ahead in this. And like I said, it could run everything, sharing the gamut from data and information exchange all the way to potentially the interaction of systems themselves and technology exchange. It just depends on how we can characterize this and how we can move it forward.

**MODERATOR:** Okay, we'll take one last one from New York. Thanks.

**QUESTION:** Hi. Ambassador Fried, I'm Mario Calabresi from La Repubblica, Italy. May I give you a question about NATO and Afghanistan in the context of the future cooperation of NATO? Because yesterday the Italian parliament approved the renewal of the mission in Afghanistan and I would like if you can give us a comment on that. And also your position (inaudible) by Mr. Berlusconi (inaudible), do you have any comment on that?

**AMBASSADOR FRIED:** We welcome the Italian parliament's decision to support its Afghanistan mission. We welcome the Italian participation and contribution to NATO's Afghan mission. I'm not going to comment on the debate except to say I'm glad it ended with an affirmative vote. And again, we very much appreciate what Italy is doing and we appreciate Italy's commitment to keep working in support of the Afghan people.

**MODERATOR:** Ambassador Fried, General Obering, thank you very much.



[Updates](#) | [Frequent Questions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[FOIA](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Other U.S. Government Information](#)